



FACULTY SENATE COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

October 19, 2017 meeting

“But this night our feet must tread in thorny paths, or later, and for ever, the feet you love must walk in paths of flame!” (Overview)

Faculty Senate held its fifth official meeting on October 19th. It discussed the justifications for, and possible ramifications of, a shift in NCAA division, received an update on facilities optimization, and debated an administrative proposal to create a “professional track” of faculty on three-year renewable contracts.

“Remember my friend, that knowledge is stronger than memory, and we should not trust the weaker” (Announcements)

- After appreciating the work of the body, Chair Tallichet requested Senators demonstrate their continued attention and support as Senate welcomes a number of speakers in coming weeks.
- The Faculty Senate BlackBoard site now includes both the minutes from meetings and as well as the discursive communication reports, which fill in the conversational gaps not recorded in official Senate documents (i.e., the minutes).
- Chair Tallichet, who attended Jason Bailey’s talk on pension reform, provided information from the group that live-streamed the talk, Kentucky Public Pension Coalition, and asked Senators to share this information with their constituents.
 - <https://www.facebook.com/KentuckyPublicPensionCoalition/>
<https://protectpensions.org/states/kentucky/>
- Dr. Couch will be at the next Senate meeting (11/2) to discuss retention. Dr. Schroeder will also attend to discuss the General Education Taskforce and General Education reform efforts.
- Open enrollment for 2018 Health Benefits is 10/16 to 11/3.

“There is a reason that all things are as they are, and did you see with my eyes and know with my knowledge, you would perhaps better understand.” (Athletics update)

Responding to a Senate request for specifics regarding possible athletics savings, Senator Adams gave a PowerPoint presentation that utilized NCAA data and information from IR to outline both the cost and apparent “return on investment” of our current DI program. (The PowerPoint, and a brochure that counters the various arguments schools use to justify their heavy subsidization of DI athletics, is available on the Faculty Senate BlackBoard site under a menu item titled “Athletic info.”)

Highlights: In 2014, the last year the NCAA compiled composite data, the median amount DI schools paid to support their Football Championship subdivision programs was \$11,041,000. The same year, the median amount DIII schools paid to support athletics programs with football was \$3,382,100. In 2014, MSU paid/provided \$9,341,671 to its DI Football Championship program.

Costs have risen since 2014 (our subsidization in 2016 was \$11,426,032), but the data clearly indicates that DIII, even with football (a pricy sport), is significantly cheaper than DI. Given the fact that we have already proven that we are capable of “coming in” below median NCAA costs, we will undoubtedly see significant savings if we move to DIII.

Institutional data offers little evidence that our current DI program provides substantial opportunities for URM students or that it increases the progression and graduation rates of the bulk of our student-athletes. Less than a quarter of student-athletes are URM (123 of 520), and only 34 of those 123 URM student-athletes (so 27.6% of URM athletes, or 6.5% of MSU athletes overall) actually receive athletic aid. This is somewhat surprising, given the fact that DI is largely defined as *scholarship* sports. Furthermore, the bulk of our student-athletes do **not** graduate at a greater rate than their non-athlete peers. The high graduation rates of our female athletes actually drive up the averages. For 4 out of the 5 years since we received grant from the NCAA to update and enhance our EAGLE center (a state-of-the-art study space where student-athletes can get special help and tutoring), the 6-year graduation rate of our male student-athletes has been **below** the 6-year graduation rate of all male students. In some cases, significantly below.

In the discussion that followed, various Senators voiced their support for a movement away from DI athletics, and one even suggested that the institution should consider cutting athletics altogether. Senator Schack stated her belief that universities should not offer sports that are known to cause brain injury and contended that the money we invest in football would be better spent on scholarship opportunities for underrepresented students. This scholarship program could be named “Saving More Heads.”

**“But we are strong, each in our purpose, and we are all more strong together.”
(President’s report)**

The President noted that there is a pdf that outlines proposed changes to the pension system, but he is more interested in seeing a draft of the actual bill. Instead of walking the body

through the outline, he will rely on the Communications Officer to send the pdf with this report. (Note: a copy of “Keeping the Promise,” the pdf outline of changes, was emailed with this report.)

The Rock opened on Tuesday, in time for Homecoming. People should stop by to see it and eat the food there, “which is actually good.” After Homecoming, we will start moving people from the six houses slated for demolition, and, by the holidays, raze those buildings.

We’re working on a partnership with St. Claire’s to move student health services to the CHER building, which we own. The building is obviously set up for health services, and the move has the added bonus of allowing us to integrate the “dental piece” without the added expense of bringing a St. Claire dentist to campus once a week. When St. Claire’s new corner building is done, students will have access to a full range of services, as they will be able to just walk across the road to the pharmacy. (In response to a question about on-demand shuttle service for sick students, Dr. Morgan stated that sick students are currently having friends drive them to the health services on campus; he imagined that this would continue when the services were moved to share, but he also promised to look into the issue.)

Mental health services will more than likely be housed on the first floor of Ally Young. There’s a suite of office there that have a discreet entrance. We know we need expanded services in that regard, so we are looking to contract a third person during peak times to help our two permanent mental health professionals. Ally Young will also house what we’ll call our Center of Experiential Education, where we’ll have undergraduate research, international education and study abroad, and elements of career services. Reducing our campus footprint isn’t just about reducing maintenance costs; it is also an effort to place resources together in a logical fashion and provide a better experience for students. To that end, Fields will be “Honors Central” and Housing will move into the bottom of Alumni Tower.

In response to a question about the future of Laughlin, Dr. Morgan noted that he has only asked for the utility costs of Laughlin and Weatherby. There are no immediate plans for Laughlin. He is, though, looking in to what we might do with Butler and Cooper.

“I am getting quite uneasy about him, though why I should I do not know, but I do wish that he would write, if it were only a single line” (Regent’s report)

The Regent, who was away at a conference, was unable to make a report.

“It is only when a man feels himself face to face with such horrors that he can understand their true import.” (Provost’s report)

The Provost, who regretted being unable to attend, asked Chair Tallichet to distribute a proposal for a new classification of faculty on three-year renewable contracts. The description of, and justification for, this new classification is appended, in its entirety, at the end of this report.

Select members of the Executive Council, who had been at the meeting where this idea was raised, attempted to offer the rationale that had been put forward by the President and the Provost. In a time of great economic uncertainty, the institution is not really able to commit to many new (or even replacement) tenure-track lines. A new classification of faculty in a “professional track,” akin to the medical/clinical model of instruction, could be a way around this impasse to meet the instructional needs of programs. Such a classification, which we could try in a sort of trial run of a finite length, just might be able to attract and retain a higher quality of applicant (who would receive a “guarantee” of three years of employment, with the possibility of promotion and further renewal) while granting the administration the flexibility it needs in terms of workforce and program size and strength.

Members of the body posed a number of questions about the proposal that Chair Tallichet (being merely the messenger, not the author) could not answer:

- Why is the standard teaching load for a new track devoted primarily to teaching less than the standard load for tenure line faculty?
- We already have contingent faculty on renewable contracts—instructors—why can’t we extend their contracts to three years, if length of time is important, and offer them the perks provided in the new model?
- If we wish to attract more faculty with terminal degrees and keep those faculty for longer (if finite) times, why don’t we just extend our designation of “visiting professor” to a three-year term, and thus obviate the problem (in Psychology) outlined in the proposal?
- If this proposal is a sort of “stop gap” idea that we’re considering for a “trial run,” why does the proposal discuss promotion in and through professor (as such a promotion would require, based on our current policies, 11 years)?
- Why is there no allowance for research? If clinical lines are necessary, it would seem as though some of the “professional track” of faculty would need to complete research, and such people should be granted a reduction in teaching load.
- How does this new classification necessarily help us in terms of external metrics (such as rankings in *US World News and Report*, SACSCOC reaccreditation, or performance funding)?

A range of Senators voiced their opposition to the proposal, noting that it effectively erodes tenure. Senator Thomas urged the body to not just reject the proposal, but to stand up for the basic principle of tenure itself. A number also asserted that the proposal does not solve the problem it purports to solve. Senator J. Hare stated that programs like Biology (home to two of the largest majors on campus) already have difficulty hiring and retaining new faculty on the tenure line because we cannot offer competitive compensation. She did not see how this new classification, which does not even provide any semblance of support for the research a Biologist would have to perform to remain intellectually active and prepare students for careers in STEM+H fields, could attract high quality applicants. Senator Schack claimed that the proposal runs counter to institution-wide efforts to streamline and simplify in order to maximize efficiency. Instead of making faculty classifications unnecessarily complex, and rendering new “classes” of teachers, she argued that we should retain our simple and effective system.

“Listen to them, the children of the night. What music they make!” (Senate committee reports)

- Academic Issues—No report.
- Evaluation—The committee continues to evaluate FEPs.
- Faculty Welfare and Concerns—The committee is working through PAc-10 and posed a number of questions regarding the policy to Dr. Laurie Couch. When the committee receives answers, members will begin drafting.
- Governance—There’s a new Vice-Chair of Governance (Julia Finch).
- Issues—The committee is addressing a number of issues:
 - It is looking into the discrepancies in organizational structures that have arisen as the result of various moves and consolidations within Academic Affairs and working to ensure that our policies and procedures are congruent with these divergent structures.
 - Chair T. Hare has asked for someone in the travel office to come to Senate to explain the new travel policies. When he hears back, he will schedule the presentation.
 - He provided Chair Tallichet with a handout that explains how to access “procurement services” in Office 365. Chair Tallichet will upload this document to the Faculty Senate BlackBoard site.
 - The committee, as well as the Executive Council, is still seeking clarification on the role of the University Counsel, particularly in regards to the indemnification of faculty when they are performing university duties. The President, who was thoroughly apprised of this issue last Monday, says he will look into it.
 - Last, but not least, Chair T. Hare contacted our SACSCOC liaison to ask about the assessment of unattached minors. He was told that the university is currently working on methods for assessing minors (such as French and Gender Studies) that have no accompanying major.
 - In a brief discussion that followed, Senator Adams noted the SACSCOC liaison for Asbury University, who gave a presentation on reaccreditation to the Bluegrass Higher Education Consortium’s Academic Leadership Academy on October 18th, stated that she was unaware of any SACSCOC requirement to assess unattached minors and, in the course of the presentation, provided Academy leaders with a draft of the new SACSCOC guidelines (that will be finalized and published in December), which did not include mention of minors.

“Truly there is no such thing as finality.” The Senate adjourned at 5:08 p.m. The next full meeting will be on November 2nd. (“And then there was silence, deep, awful silence, which chilled me.”)



Provided by the 2017-18 Faculty Senate Communications Officer, who has “a brain that a man should have were he much gifted.”

Message from the Provost regarding three-year “professional track” positions:

Descriptions of the non-tenure track, Assistant, Associate and Professor positions.

The President and I invite the Faculty Senate to consider adding a new category/position of faculty titled Assistant, Associate and Professor, non-tenure track. The new designation would be added to others, such as Instructor, etc.

Our thinking is twofold:

First, to better align with external rankings and the like, such as US News and World Report we should retitle/reclassify a number of former faculty members, such as those in Space Science, that moved recently to staff positions back to faculty status. The preferred category would be this new title—faculty with rank but without tenure. These employees’ responsibilities would remain the same—they teach and conduct research now—but their titles would change to better position us.

Second, we believe it would be helpful to have such a faculty classification to help recruit and retain highly credentialed faculty moving forward, particularly in the immediate future. The thought is to offer three year contracts (this would apply to new employees, not the folks we have already as noted in the first point). Since the immediate future ahead is somewhat murky financially and keeping in mind that we have many open positions, our thinking is to make some appointments using this new faculty category as we retool for the future. In this way, we could appoint highly credentialed faculty who would teach and provide service (the kind to be determined). We might consider this new category to a 21-credit hour annual teaching assignment

Let me provide an example. Psychology has a position presently filled with a Visiting Assistant Professor—it was a two-year appointment. The incumbent is leaving at the end of this academic year. As you might imagine the chair and faculty of Psychology want strongly to search for a replacement. Since our financial future is not clear, we would be more comfortable searching for and appointing a doctorally credentialed candidate with a three-year contract. Doing so would provide Psychology with a properly credentialed faculty who would also provide some service, perhaps advising, for at least three years, during which time we hope to be on more sound footing financially. This approach provides the department, faculty and students with more stability (faculty appointment is three years), appropriately credentialed faculty, and some service to help relieve our already overburdened faculty. There would be no significant expectation for scholarship during the appointment.

In the future, we may wish to consider building out the new faculty position to a three-year renewal with the possibility of promotion, still non-tenure track. For instance, imagine we appoint someone as Assistant Professor, non-tenure track to a three-year contract. In the third year the faculty is reviewed for renewal for another three years. If renewed, the faculty is offered another three-year contract. In the sixth year the faculty is reviewed for both renewal and promotion to Associate Professor, non-tenure track. A candidate could be renewed but not promoted. A candidate might be renewed and promoted. A candidate might not be

renewed. The reviews would most certainly be faculty led. I understand that much discussion would be needed to establish this more elaborate model/position, but I hope that we might have such a discussion when the time is right to do so.

In the meantime, I hope the Faculty Senate will consider establishing the new faculty position, Assistant, Associate and Professor, non-tenure track.

Finally, I want to assure the Faculty Senate that this request is not an attempt to undermine tenure. For my own part I see the new position providing us with more flexibility to make much need appointments presently. I also see the benefit of having this appointment to better align with external rating agencies, such as US News and World Report